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SUBJECT Bulgarian Students at the Ochakov Torpedo Boat School

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Command

1. The Torpedo Boat School was part of the naval garrison at Ochakov (46-36N, 31-32E). The garrison was under the command of a Col. Davgay. Despite the fact that the school was an integral part of the garrison, it was administered by an officer who was subordinate to the Headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol. Bulgarian students were first sent to this school on 3 May 1948.

Staff

2. The staff of the school included:

Lt. Col. Ternyak, Chief of Staff to Colonel Davgay and Commandant of the school (Russian)

Lt. Col. Sidelnikov, Political Officer (Russian)

Maj. Karamushka, Assistant Political Officer (Russian)

Sr. Lt. Stefan Donchev, Battalion Commander (Bulgarian)

Sr. Lt. Jandev, Political Commander, Battalion (Bulgarian)

Sr. Lt. Boznano, 1st Detachment Commander (Bulgarian)

1st. Lutov, 2nd Detachment Commander (Bulgarian)

Lt. Grigor Tsvetanov Grigorov, Political Commander, 1st Detachment
(Bulgarian)

Lt. Murachov (Bulgarian), 2nd Detachment Political Commander. In September 1949 he was promoted to Battalion Political Commander and was replaced by Lt. Ovcharov (Bulgarian).

Lt. Petrov, Artillery Officer (Bulgarian)

Lt. Chivikov, Communications Officer (Bulgarian)

Lt. Kozhukharov, Navigator (Bulgarian)

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Students

3. The student body included 75 enlisted men, 40 warrant officers, and 32 officers. This group was broken down into two detachments of six sections each. Each section contained twelve men, making up a torpedo boat crew. These crews worked together in school and aboard ship through the whole course at Ochakov.

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4. For approximately a week after arriving at Ochakov the men were occupied in establishing their quarters, washing clothing, and doing a general clean-up job in the area surrounding the living quarters.

Schedule

5. On 10 May 1948 students were assigned class rooms and laboratories according to their specialty: engineers, torpedomen, radiomen, and gunners. Officers and enlisted men attended the same classes. The schedule for the next three months was as follows:

	0600	0615-0700	0700-0800	0800-1200	1200-1300	1300-1800
Mon.	Reveille	Breakfast	PT & drill	Polit. lect.	Lunch	Lectures
Tue.	" "	" "	" "	Leadership	" "	and
Wed.	" "	" "	" "	Naval science	" "	laboratory
Thu.	" "	" "	" "	Administration	" "	according to
Fri.	" "	" "	" "	Russian language	" "	specialty
Sat.	" "	" "	" "	Reading & current events	" "	
Sun.	" "	" "	Free time	Free time	" "	Free time

Political Lectures

6. All political training at Ochakov was directed by Lt. Col. Sidelnikov or his assistant, Maj. Karamushka. Weekly schedules were prepared by fleet headquarters and submitted to the school; the schedule was followed and interpreted by one of the two political officers.

a. All political lectures were handled by Russian officers, but discussions were usually led by political officers from the Bulgarian cadre.

b. Lectures and discussions concerned Soviet communism, Bulgarian communism, the Comintern and the concept of international communism. The main theme that was preached continually by these political officers was the inevitability of war between the East and the West, the categorical opposition of popular democracy and capitalism. Another point of discussion concerned the imminent collapse of the Western economies, especially those of the United States and England. The students were led to believe that labor conditions, housing, education, and inter-racial troubles in the United States had grown to such proportions that the American people were near revolution. Turkey was described as being in the Western camp, which is being exploited to the fullest by American and British imperialists. Iran and other Middle Eastern countries are also in the same camp.

Leadership

7. A course in leadership and discipline was conducted during the first three months of training. This course included lectures and discussions concerning discipline, chain of command, duties of officers and non-commissioned officers in combat operations at sea, as well as on land, and other questions pertaining to command functions.

Naval Science

8. The course in naval science dealt with naval terminology (Russian and Bulgarian), types and purposes of all naval craft, naval communications, amphibious operations, and theoretical naval problems. Aircraft identification, air-sea tactics, and the importance of naval aircraft in land and sea actions also were discussed. The importance of Soviet-satellite co-operation in the future war against the West was continually emphasized.

Administration

9. The structure of the Soviet and Bulgarian navies was studied, with the interchangeability of equipment, intelligence, and personnel in mind. The organization and functions of each integral part of the naval organization, from the chief of staff down to the sailor, were covered, as well as the internal organization and function of each organic naval unit. Supply and maintenance procedures were outlined with special attention to wartime needs of the naval establishment.

Russian Language**CONFIDENTIAL**

10. For four hours each week all students studied the Russian language under the direction of civilian teachers. The course included reading, dictation.

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writing, and grammar. The students complained about this class because they were not interested in grammar, and least of all in speaking Russian. All courses were conducted in Russian at the school; the students spoke Bulgarian only when they were in their own quarters.

Reading and Current Events

11. Every Saturday morning the Bulgarian political officer of each of the two detachments conducted discussions of current events based on Soviet newspapers and bulletins. In addition to this, an officer or enlisted man usually was chosen to read aloud from Soviet or Bulgarian contemporary communist literature.

Laboratory and Lectures

12. Every enlisted man and officer attended laboratory courses in either engineering, ordnance, or communications for at least four hours each day, according to the job assignment of the individual. Complete laboratories were furnished for communications and engineering at the main naval garrison. Ordnance studies were conducted at the main arsenal, machine shops, and torpedo sheds at the naval base.

Study

13. Every student was expected to study at least two hours each evening, from 1900 to 2100, except on Sundays when all men were free on the base for relaxation.

Free Time

14. For the first three months at Ochakov all students were restricted to the base. They were free on Sunday from reveille to midnight to do as they pleased in games and other entertainment within the confines of the base. After this period, three days were designated as leave days: Wednesday, 1700-2400; Saturday, 1700-2400; and Sunday, 1200-2400. During each of these days a maximum of 20 percent of the students could be off base, but only in the city of Ochakov. A town-leave schedule was posted weekly to show who was permitted to go off base during the week.

On-the-Job Training

15. In the middle of August 1948, after three months of training in theory, students were assigned to various maintenance and repair shops to work with Soviet seamen and officers on the job. The two Bulgarian detachments were composed exactly to duplicate two Soviet detachments of the same size. Each Bulgarian had a Soviet counterpart with whom he worked in familiarizing himself with the operation and maintenance of radio, engines, or ordnance to which he was assigned. This on-the-job training lasted approximately one month.

Sea Exercises

16. On 15 September 1948 the Bulgarian crews began to work with the Soviets in preparation for sea exercises. All ships were put into shape, engines checked, and crews assigned to ships. Two full crews were assigned to each ship, twelve Soviets and twelve Bulgarians. For two or three days before sailing, crews were briefed on the problem which would be presented during the field exercise. Ships went out on sea exercises in formations of one, two, or six. During the period from 15 September to the beginning of November, Bulgarian and Soviet crews manned twelve torpedo boats in five different exercises: twice in single-ship attack formation, twice in double-ship attack formation, and once in a six-ship attack formation. No gunnery or torpedo firing practice took place during this period.

Winterization

17. Early in November 1948 all ships were made ready for winterization. All machine guns were removed from their mounts, torpedo tubes were dismantled,

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and engines and motors were covered with grease to prevent corrosion. A heavy grease was injected into each cylinder of the engines; this grease was called TS-50. Radios and all other electric equipment were removed from the ships and taken to shops for repair and reconditioning. After all this was done, the boats were pulled ashore. The complete winterization and storage procedure took approximately twenty days.

Examinations

18. After all ships were winterized and stored, by 25 November 1948, the students began to prepare for examinations. They were examined in all phases of theoretical and laboratory training received during the academic year. A daily study period of four hours was enforced in the Bulgarian compound all through the month of December. Immediately after 1 January examination schedules were posted indicating where and at what time each individual student was to be examined. Students were scheduled according to rank. All examinations were oral, conducted by an examining commission of four Soviet officers for each course. All examinations were conducted in the Russian language. By the end of January 1949 all examinations were completed, grades posted, and students graduated at a ceremony in which all the officers and men of the naval garrison participated.

De-winterization and Preparations for Sailing

19. Early in February 1949 each man was assigned to work with his Soviet counterpart in preparing the twelve torpedo boats for sailing. All engines were taken to the main engine workshops to be checked completely in a 1000-hour inspection. Radios and auto-pilots were checked and re-installed, machine guns remounted and sighted, and the ships scraped and painted. Most of the work in this operation was done by the Bulgarians, under very close supervision by the Soviets, since it was anticipated that the Bulgarians would take over the flotilla in the following summer. Reconditioning was completed by the end of March 1949 and the ships were launched for spring and summer activities.

Torpedo Firing, Gunnery Practice, and Night Attacks

20. Beginning in April 1949, the torpedo flotilla was operated and maintained exclusively by Bulgarian crews, but under the supervision of Soviet observers. Sea problems involving single-ship and co-ordinated attacks of two, six, and twelve ships were carried out during April and May.
- a. Early in April 1949 torpedoes were carried aboard the ships for the first time. The full load of two torpedoes per ship was carried and fired during each sea problem. Torpedoes were launched from fixed tubes which were situated on the right and the left sides of the ship, parallel to the axis of roll. Before firing, a powder propellant in cloth bags was placed in the breech block of the tube. This propellant was fired either electrically from the bridge or manually by a torpedo man. Gas pressure built up by the slow burning of the powder charge forced the torpedo out of the tube. War heads were removed during practice and replaced by simulated war heads filled with water.
- b. Night, day, and smoke-screened attacks were practiced. In daylight attacks usually two ships in step formation initiated the attack from the rear of the target, turning right or left depending upon the position of the target. When exactly abeam of the target they fired both torpedoes and retreated at full speed in the direction opposite to initial approach. Night attacks were usually made broadside, with quick turn and retreat at full speed in the direction opposite to the approach. Smoke-screened attacks were initiated first by one or two torpedo boats circling the target at full speed, discharging smoke from generators. When the circle was completed, two or four torpedo boats discharged their torpedoes to cover a wide arc of the circle. In all practice torpedo attacks, torpedoes were aimed under the target ship. When using simulated targets, such as floating barges, wooden target hulls, and others, torpedoes were aimed at the target itself.
- c. After torpedoes were fired at simulated targets, the same targets were used for gunnery practice. Every TA-200 is armed with six twin-mounted heavy Soviet machine guns. These guns are used chiefly as defensive weapons.

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while at sea, since the TM-200 has no effective armor-plating and has a fairly low speed for a torpedo boat. Five or six times during the month of May 1949 the entire flotilla engaged in sea-to-shore gunnery practice, using stationary targets on the beaches west of the Ochakov base.

d. On several occasions depth charges were dropped in maneuvers. Each ship carried two large depth charges, 60mm diameter x 60mm height and six small ones, 30mm diameter x 60mm height. These depth charges were fused with hydrostatic fuses. They were set for detonation depth by turning the fuse, located on the top of the bomb, to the desired depth. Depth charges were stored at an underground storage depot at the naval base of Ochakov, along with torpedoes and other ordnance material.

e. Late in May 1949 the ships went out to sea for anti-aircraft gunnery practice. Soviet naval aircraft towed large balloons or sleeves as targets.

Final Training

21. During July 1949, the torpedo boats were finally transferred to the direct command of the Bulgarian Black Sea Surface Fleet.

a. Through August, September, and October 1949 the ships were manned only by Bulgarians. On only one occasion during this period were there any Soviet observers. The observers were the two political officers, Lt. Col. Sidelnikov and Maj. Karamushka, one gunnery officer, and one engineering officer.

b. Late in October 1949 ships were prepared for stowing for the winter. The same procedure as outlined above for winterization was followed, but only Bulgarian crews took part in this work. The job was finished and ships pulled ashore by 20 November 1949.

c. From 20 November 1949 until demobilization orders came through on 4 January 1950, the Bulgarian crews were free except for daily political and current events discussions, physical training, and close order drill. Students were allowed to go into the city of Ochakov and were even issued passes to Nikolayev and Odessa.

d. On 5 January 1950 all students turned in their Soviet uniforms and were issued civilian clothing. On the morning of 7 January the Bulgarian detachment was loaded aboard the Russian coastal ship Ch-F-22 and taken to Odessa, from where they went by train. Some of the enlisted men elected to remain in the navy and enter officer training. The rest were discharged and allowed to return home, but were registered in the reserves. There was no coercion exercised on the men to keep them in service.

22. While the Bulgarians were in the USSR they received Soviet Navy pay and allowances. Base pay was as follows:

Sailor	100 rubles per month
Squad leader	160 rubles per month
NCO	750 rubles per month
Tech/NCO	1000 rubles per month
Officer	1500 rubles per month
Platoon Commander	1600 rubles per month
Battalion Commander	2000 rubles per month
Deputy Battalion Commander	1800 rubles per month
Battalion Political Officer	1800 rubles per month

a. Enlisted men and warrant officers ate in the general mess of the Soviet garrison, while the officers ate in their own dining room, purchasing their own food. All officers were allowed to eat at the Soviet general mess, but the Bulgarians refused to eat the food that was prepared there.

b. Officers and men were quartered in the same building. Enlisted men slept in dormitories which accommodated 15-20 men each. There were five such rooms for enlisted men. The warrant officers had four rooms and they were divided 2, 6, and 20 in these rooms. The officers had ten rooms including a single room each for the battalion commander and his deputy. The other officers were divided equally among the other eight rooms. The quarters were large, clean, and comfortable.

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23. During the first three months in Ochakov all correspondence was forbidden. Political officers explained that this was done to prevent the western powers from discovering that Bulgarians were being trained in the Soviet Union. All personnel were restricted to the confines of the Bulgarian compound and the main garrison. Morale was very low and the officers and men complained daily about the situation. Finally, their parents contacted Bulgarian naval authorities, demanding that they be told what had been done with their sons. After this, students were allowed to write and receive mail. All mail was directed to the main post office in Ochakov, Box Number 1. Letters were addressed without showing military title.
24. Students were forbidden to tell what they were doing or anything about the surroundings in their letters home. As far as could be determined there was, however, no censorship of incoming or outgoing mail.
25. During the first three months at the school there was no entertainment except reading, card playing, and group games. After this, the Soviets organized dances and parties to which girls from the communities surrounding the naval base were invited. It was forbidden to escort these girls home or to be with them in the town.
26. Guard duty of the whole Ochakov base was done chiefly by members of the Bulgarian detachment. The Bulgarians did not accept this very well since they felt that this duty should at least be divided equally between the Soviets and the Bulgarians. This contributed somewhat to the bad morale prevalent at the school.
27. The Soviets attempted to compensate for the lack of entertainment facilities in the city and the Bulgarian compound by inviting Bulgarian officers and non-commissioned officers to the Soviet Officers' Club, where it was possible to see Soviet movies, buy certain post exchange supplies, and use the post library. Morale was extremely low in spite of these attempts.

Other Trainees in the Soviet Union

28. In addition to the Bulgarians training on torpedo boats, there was another group of Bulgarians who were training at the naval base at Odessa for service on submarines. At Odessa there was also a group of Albanians, considerably more numerous than the Bulgarians, who were training on submarines. Several Bulgarian officers were attending a Soviet Navy school in Leningrad, as well as officers from other communist countries.

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Comment: The use of explosives to launch torpedoes, as described in Paragraph 20a, is unusual but not impossible. Further information is required for confirmation.

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Comment: The letters ChF in Paragraph 21d probably stand for Chernomorski Flot, or Black Sea Fleet.

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Comment: The number of warrant officers given in Paragraph 22b is smaller than that given in Paragraph 3.

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